

Radiological Dispersal Device

A radiological dispersal device (RDD) poses a threat to public health and safety through the spread of radioactive materials. An RDD can take many forms. One such form is an explosive device coupled with radioactive material.

An RDD is not a nuclear blast. The force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. While the blast will be immediately obvious, the presence of radiation will not be clear until trained personnel with specialized equipment are on the scene.

Do not panic. The fact that you have survived the initial explosion and you are not badly injured most likely means you are going to be okay.

If there is an RDD or “Dirty Bomb”

Try to limit your exposure to the radioactive material that has been released. It is important to avoid breathing radioactive dust that may be released in the air.

1. Do not deny or delay any needed medical attention. Injuries from the explosion and any resulting fires are the most immediate concerns.
2. If you are outside and there is an explosion or authorities warn of a radiation release nearby, cover your nose and mouth and quickly go inside a building that has not been damaged. If you are already inside check to see if your building has been damaged. If your building is stable, stay where you are. Close windows and doors; turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems. Sheltering inside is a temporary measure and normally will last less than 24 hours.
3. Do not eat or drink anything that was near the scene, especially items which are not packaged (fresh fruits, water from open containers, etc.).
4. If you are told you are contaminated, this means you have radioactive material on your clothes and body. It does not mean that you have radiation sickness or that you will necessarily become ill. Only seek medical attention if you have an injury or medical emergency. If you think you have been exposed to radiation, take off your clothes and wash as soon as possible. Community facilities will be set up to assist with monitoring and decontamination.
5. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available. Tune to your local emergency broadcasting station (Emergency Alert System) for further instructions.